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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):
EVANESCO LIMITED [GB/GB]; Forde Courte, Forde
Road, Newton Abbot TQ12 4AD (GB).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **SHAW, Andrew Mark**
[GB/GB]; 8 Trehill House, Kenn, Exeter Devon EX6 7XJ
(GB).

(74) Agent: Marks & Clerk; 66-68 Hills Road, Cambridge
Cambridgeshire CB2 1LA (GB).

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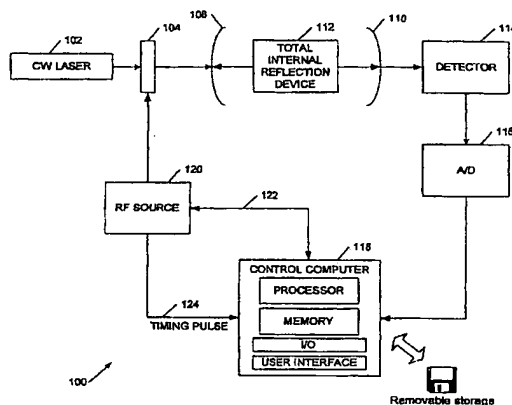
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(54) Title: EVANESCENT WAVE SENSING APPARATUS AND METHODS USING PLASMONS



(57) Abstract: This invention is generally concerned with sensing apparatus, methods and techniques based upon cavity ring-down spectroscopy (CRDS), in particular evanescent-wave based cavity ring-down plasmon resonance techniques. An evanescent wave cavity-based optical sensor is described. The sensor comprises an optical cavity formed by a pair of highly reflective surfaces such that light within said cavity makes a plurality of passes between said surfaces, an optical path between said surfaces including a reflection from a totally internally reflecting (TIR) surface, said reflection from said TIR surface generating an evanescent wave to provide a sensing function; a light source to inject light into said cavity; and a detector to detect a light level within said cavity; and wherein said TIR surface is provided with an electrically conducting material over at least part of said TIR surface such that said evanescent wave excites a plasmon within said material; whereby a change in absorption of said evanescent wave due to a change in said plasmon excitation is detectable using said detector to provide said sensing function.

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